PROCEEDINGS - 01/16/2019

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8	HEARING OF BOARD OF APPEALS
9	455 HARVARD STREET
10	Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 7:15 p.m.
11	Brookline Town Hall
12	333 Washington Street
13	Sixth Floor
14	Brookline, Massachusetts 02445
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18	Reporter: Jennifer A. Doherty, CSR
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   APPEARANCES:
  Johanna W. Schneider, Chairwoman
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   Jesse Geller, Board Member
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   Lark Palermo, Board Member
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   Polly Selkoe, Assistant Director of Regulatory
 6
   Planning
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   Victor Sheen, AURA Properties, Development Manager
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   Dartagnan Brown, EMBARC Studio, Architect
   Robert Engler, SEB, LLC, Development Consultant
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- 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 MS. SCHNEIDER: We appreciate 3 everybody's patience. I apologize for the delay in 4 getting started. This the Brookline ZBA first 5 public hearing on the project of 445 Harvard Street. 6 This is a request for a comprehensive permit under 7 Chapter 40(b) to construct a five-story building 8 with 25 rental residential units, 4,380 square feet 9 of commercial space and 20 parking spaces in a 10 below-grade garage. 11 My name is Johanna Schneider. 12 be sitting as chair for the duration of the Board's 13 proceedings on this project. My fellow Board members for this project are Jesse Geller and Lark 14 15 Palermo. This is a neighborhood that I think 16 17 is fairly familiar at this point with the 40(b) 18 process, there having been a number of other 40(b)s 19 in the last couple of years, but if at any time there are questions about the process, we are happy 20 21 to answer them. If they're questions that we can't

consultant and we can run things by her, although

not necessarily be able to answer those things on an

answer, the Board does still retain a 40(b)

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- 1 immediate basis.
- 2 So tonight being the first hearing,
- 3 we're going to kick things off by having a
- 4 presentation of the plans by the development team.
- 5 Once we have had presentation, the Board members
- 6 will ask questions that we may have about this
- 7 initial presentation. We will have an opportunity
- 8 for some public comments. Obviously as things go
- 9 on, we will be having a series of hearings that will
- 10 tend to be focused on specific issue areas relating
- 11 to the project and will feature testimony from the
- 12 applicants team and also from our peer reviewers.
- 13 Those hearings will have more directed public
- 14 comment about whatever the topic of the night is.
- We are also going to cover some
- 16 organizational administrative business tonight and
- 17 we will end by discussing when we will meet again.
- Board, anything else before we get
- 19 started? All right.
- Mr. Sheen, do you want to introduce
- 21 yourself and your team and tell us what you're
- 22 looking to do here.
- MR. SHEEN: Thank you, Ms. Chairman
- 24 For the record, my name is Victor Sheen. I am the

- 1 development manager for this particular 455 Harvard
- 2 Street project. With me today, we have Dartagnan
- 3 Brown who is our architect. We also have Bob Engler
- 4 who is our 40(b) consultant. We have Jonathan Parks
- 5 whose presence -- he's in charge of the sort
- 6 construction aspects of the development. So if
- 7 there are any questions, we have him present as
- 8 well.
- 9 And sitting in the back we have
- 10 Shimon Cohen who is the current owner of the
- 11 project, of the property as well as Yonathan Halprin
- 12 who is the development partner in this 445 LLC
- 13 company.
- 14 So with that, I would like to start
- 15 with a quick update. The last time we were before
- 16 the ZBA we were under the comprehensive permit for
- 17 our first building on 420 Harvard Street. It's gone
- 18 through a successful -- what we consider as a fairly
- 19 successful 40(b) process. At the end of the day we
- 20 were able to achieve a building with ground floor
- 21 retail, underground parking, and a stepback fifth
- 22 floor of residential units. And I'm happy to report
- 23 that the building is currently under construction.
- 24 We just finished pouring the first level of the

- 1 elevator shaft. We are officially above grade at
- 2 this point.
- We are also happy to report that the
- 4 entire ground floor of the commercial spaces are
- 5 either under lease or soon to be under lease. We
- 6 will be bringing back Re/Max as a real estate office
- 7 as portions of it and associated, I think, with a
- 8 co-tendency by a mortgage company, and then the
- 9 remaining two-thirds of the ground floor space will
- 10 be a bakery that will be added to the tenants mix.
- 11 We look to be able to disclose the
- 12 name of the baker shortly once we have the final
- 13 paperwork signed.
- So in terms of this proposal what
- 15 we're seeking -- the permit is for the demolition of
- 16 the existing commercial building currently is an
- 17 active gas station that also services vehicles.
- The building will be demolished and
- 19 in its place we are proposing essentially a sister
- 20 building to the 420 Harvard Street building with
- 21 very similar design and materials and the makeup.
- 22 So you would encompass 25 residential units with 20
- 23 apartment spaces below grade in the garage. Of the
- 24 25 residential units 20 percent of those units will

- 1 be deemed affordable at 50 percent median income.
- 2 The current lot is just about over
- 3 10,100 square feet, and the proposed building is
- 4 roughly about 34, 35,000 square feet. The building
- 5 height is exactly the same as 420 Harvard Street
- 6 that's previously approved.
- 7 By way of orientation, the site has
- 8 an address 445 Harvard Street. It's a corner lot
- 9 with a frontage on Harvard Street as well as
- 10 Thorndike Street. Currently there are three
- 11 curbcuts, two on Thorndike and one on Harvard Street
- 12 that are being used by the service station.
- Opposite to 445 Harvard Street is 455
- 14 Harvard. That was a project that was previously
- 15 approved and currently under construction. It is a
- 16 little bit smaller site a little bit over 7,000
- 17 square feet lot of area.
- The surrounding street scape composed
- 19 of a series of retail along Harvard Street and two
- 20 and a half three-story residential on Thorndike
- 21 Street. 455 was approved. I believe it's going to
- 22 be a four-story project. It's going to be above the
- 23 existing houses.
- In terms of existing conditions I

- 1 would like to sort of talk a little bit about what
- 2 is there today. So currently it's a gas station.
- 3 As is attended, it is very well used. It has
- 4 approximately 120 vehicle trips coming in and out of
- 5 the gas station currently. The gas station is
- 6 opened from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. doing weekdays and
- 7 Saturdays for all services, meaning pumping gas,
- 8 doing any repairs as well as doing inspections. So
- 9 to break down a little bit more, I think the vehicle
- 10 trips is about 80 gas trips for the gas services and
- 11 about 20 vehicles will be for the repairs, about 20
- 12 vehicles for the inspections.
- On Sundays it operates from 8 a.m. to
- 14 8 p.m. for gas pumping only. There are no repair
- 15 and inspection services on Sundays. So effectively
- 16 this gas station is in operation seven days a week
- 17 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. doing weekdays plus Saturdays
- 18 at 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sundays.
- 19 So the existing building currently
- 20 has two service bays and one inspection bays that
- 21 are in the main building itself. And approximately
- 22 30 parking -- surface parking spaces that covers the
- 23 balance of the site itself. Most of the customer
- 24 parking are in the front of the building on Harvard

- 1 Street with two lanes of gas pumping, and then the
- 2 remainder of this site behind the building as well
- 3 as on the side of the building off Thorndike is
- 4 really sort of the waiting area, staging area for
- 5 cars to be serviced by the station. So overall,
- 6 there are approximately existing 30 service parking
- 7 spaces that is fully utilized by the service
- 8 station.
- 9 The station is in compliance, in
- 10 compliance with the DOR, DEP, and it participates in
- 11 the Massachusetts General Law 21 J program. 21 J
- 12 program is an insurance program for underground
- 13 storage tank clean-up. So it's a reimbursement
- 14 program. If there is a leakage from the holding
- 15 tanks, then the owner will be responsible to clean
- 16 it up and will be reimbursed by the 21 J fund.
- 17 The tanks are constantly being
- 18 monitored, so the ownership knows exactly how much
- 19 gas is being pumped out, and how much gas is being
- 20 deposited. So if there are any discrepancies, then
- 21 the state as well as the owner shall be notified and
- 22 for the investigation to take place. So far there
- 23 has been no reportable events.
- So with that, I actually would like

- 1 to turn it over to Dartagnan to talk more about the
- 2 project from a design perspective and then we can
- 3 answer any questions.
- 4 MR. BROWN: Thank you, Victor.
- 5 Again, Madam Chair, members of the Board, I'm
- 6 Dartagnan Brown, architect on this project. Great
- 7 to be back again. Quick note just to follow up on
- 8 this line of Victor's. Currently the site is
- 9 virtually a hundred percent either paved or with
- 10 structure, except one small planter bed that houses
- 11 right along the edge of Harvard. As kind of high
- 12 level relative to our site, as Victor mentioned is
- 13 off of Thorndike and Harvard Street. We're right on
- 14 the 66 --
- THE COURT REPORTER: Could you slow
- 16 down?
- 17 MR. BROWN: So indicated in blue here
- 18 is the bus route line, the station within 400 feet
- 19 of us. Half a mile walk down is Coolidge Corner T
- 20 and then in the opposite direction a third of a mile
- 21 gets you to the Harvard Avenue stop.
- Our site here located, again, on the
- 23 corner of Thorndike is one district with our 420
- 24 site being down here and 455 site. And I'll get a

- 1 little more to the architecture. As Victor
- 2 mentioned, we're looking to have this complementary
- 3 sister building. We're in the early stages of kind
- 4 of the actual aesthetic but in terms of setting the
- 5 fundamental massing for the ground floor retail that
- 6 ties into the adjacent context, the bay
- 7 articulation, the fascade, the successful moments
- 8 that we worked through with the town, the peer
- 9 reviewer, Cliff, and the abutters are elements that
- 10 we're starting to draw now initially and they kind
- 11 of stepped back fifth floor. Some of adjacent
- 12 heights with the 455 across the street, and as we
- 13 transition into the neighborhoods and across down to
- 14 Coolidge Street.
- So aerial footprint, this is the
- 16 proposal at 455 under construction now with
- 17 superimposed on our site and then our project here
- 18 at 445, what we're looking to do is create kind of
- 19 that street scape identity along Harvard Street so
- 20 they will have kind of the ground floor presence.
- 21 We'll take that up and tie that into the adjacent
- 22 building.
- Very initial rendering, so the idea
- 24 that we have, again, the bay articulation, the

- 1 corner slides that looks very similar to 420, we see
- 2 as we start to go through the process, the actual
- 3 materiality, maybe some of scaling of elements, how
- 4 we treat the fascade conditions. We can see that
- 5 evolving nicely but fundamentally at this level
- 6 we're looking for corner entry off of Thorndike and
- 7 Harvard.
- 8 Currently there is a curbcut here and
- 9 along Harvard Street. We're proposing a single
- 10 curbcut entry into the garage, which I'll get to in
- 11 a moment, with the residential entry flanking off to
- 12 the right, and then the stepback as well.
- In terms of plan, the basement plan
- 14 underground here, so the idea is we have a car lift
- 15 system that would bring you down into semi automated
- 16 systems. I know this came up when we were going
- 17 through 420, but in this proposal here, it's
- 18 actually all contained in the basement within the
- 19 building, so none of the parking is visible to the
- 20 outside. Within the basement level here we have 20
- 21 spots. We have room for mechanical trash utility,
- 22 bike storage, accessible spots. We have elevator
- 23 access down to the garage. And off of the first
- 24 floor, so coming off Harvard Street here you can see

- 1 where the existing curbcuts are noted. One here,
- 2 here, and then here. Again, that would get built
- 3 in.
- 4 With sidewalk we are proposing to
- 5 locate a loading zone off Harvard Street where the
- 6 existing curbcut is. The inside corner for the
- 7 retail entry, residential lobby here. And then
- 8 coming off the garage, we know they will be details
- 9 that we need to look at and how we set the site
- 10 lines up, similar to exit strategies we worked on
- 11 420, but the idea is that we have a cueing space
- 12 internally here with the car lift going down as
- 13 mentioned. There will be temp spot here if somebody
- 14 wanted to drop something off, they can come into the
- 15 building and have direct access into the residential
- 16 portion of the building with amenity space and a
- 17 landscape buffer rear-end side yard.
- 18 Over here are the southeast corner we
- 19 have direct access as well out for egress. So Blair
- 20 Hines is on this project or his firm rather is
- 21 working this with us. They're on the 420 project as
- 22 well. We are starting to look how we work with the
- 23 existing street trees, how we start to look at
- 24 paving and landscape options. That's still very

- 1 early on, we know, but we want to start to get that
- 2 into the mix. So the idea of creating a stepback
- 3 front entry to the retail, the residential lobby,
- 4 looking at the street tree plantings, setting brick
- 5 kind of wrapping that corner as we infill the
- 6 curbcuts.
- 7 Moving to the back area -- so the
- 8 idea of working on some landscape buffering along
- 9 here, we are having more of a permeable paver system
- 10 to allow for drainage and suffrage and we'll get
- 11 into it with engineering, but that will have come
- 12 off of Thorndike and wrap around up to Harvard.
- 13 In terms of overall unit breakdown as
- 14 you mentioned, we're at 25 units so a mix of 13 one
- 15 bedrooms with an 840 average. We have two bedrooms,
- 16 there are nine of those at a thousand thirty and
- 17 three bedrooms, we have three of those at 1,190
- 18 which I'll show you in a second. This is first
- 19 throughout the building. So a mix of one to two and
- 20 three bedrooms, three bedrooms on the corner taking
- 21 advantage of two sides of exposure. And as we move
- 22 up through the building, the top floor setting
- 23 anywhere back from nine foot -- seven foot nine to
- 24 nine foot ten on the front, almost ten and a half

- 1 feet on the side and eleven foot two off of
- 2 Thorndike Street on the north.
- 3 Then on the roof of that would be an
- 4 increase screen enclosure for mechanical units which
- 5 are anywhere from a little bit over thirty feet away
- 6 from the adjacent building, 77 on our property up to
- 7 40 feet back off of Harvard Street and similar 30
- 8 feet off of the buildings along Coolidge, and off of
- 9 Thorndike Street about 29, 30 feet as well.
- Just some schematic elevation in
- 11 terms of setting heights, similar approach with 420,
- 12 kind of the overall stacking of the building, the
- 13 envelope, the ground floor retail are present, kind
- 14 of that done in a darker stone panel system with the
- 15 bay articulation above.
- This is a view along Thorndike
- 17 Street. So again, early on, but looking how we're
- 18 starting to step down in the scale of the building
- 19 as it transitions into the neighborhood. The
- 20 residential garage entry here, the residential
- 21 entry, the ground floor retail. And then we put
- 22 together a series of kind of massing heights along
- 23 445 to Thorndike to our site, Coolidge and 441
- 24 Harvard. The overall area that I showed earlier of

- 1 how this site itself on that intersection of
- 2 Thorndike and Harvard.
- 3 Some early massing. Schedules.
- 4 We're starting to write some shadow studies
- 5 understanding the impacts of abutting homes. One
- 6 thing we did successfully at 420 is work with all
- 7 direct abutters and that helped to really shape the
- 8 project. So starting with this, we'll run a series
- 9 of shadows, work with the abutters around us to
- 10 under impact and how we will keep working through
- 11 the process.
- In terms of initial pallet of
- 13 materials, again, the idea that we're in the large
- 14 format storm veneer. We have kind of a cast base
- 15 looking at moments of natural wood, kind of the
- 16 quality and elements that would make up the site is
- 17 the bike parking being at a very high level at this
- 18 point.
- 19 Traffic so I'm not a traffic expert
- 20 myself, but a high level overview as Victor
- 21 mentioned, we will be bringing our traffic
- 22 consultant during this process is just getting the
- 23 change in use from the commercial garage and gas
- 24 station. I think we should see quite promising

- 1 results in the reduction of impact on the site and
- 2 the incoming and outgoing traffic along Harvard and
- 3 Thorndike. We will include a transportation
- 4 management program as well and take kind of the same
- 5 safety measures we have done with 420 to get to a
- 6 successful understanding of traffic impacts for the
- 7 proposal and also the relative reduction in the
- 8 current state.
- 9 Civil engineers, so again, we will
- 10 have McKenzie who worked with us on 420 to
- 11 understand -- we are coming from a fully impervious
- 12 surface now, so how we can work with the setbacks in
- 13 the building to allow for sub surface infiltration,
- 14 which is again understanding how that can better
- 15 improve the run out board of conditions on the site
- 16 relative to the construction of the new project and
- 17 what is currently happening on the site.
- I think with that, we're good. Thank
- 19 you.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Any questions about
- 21 the presentation?
- MR. GELLER: Not about the
- 23 presentation.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. Mr. Sheen, and

- 1 maybe Mr. Engler, this is a question for you, just a
- 2 couple of procedural 40(b) type matters. Has there
- 3 been a project eligibility letter issued, and if so
- 4 by whom.
- 5 MR. SHEEN: Sure. So the project was
- 6 reviewed on Mass. Housing Partnership, MHP, who is
- 7 currently the lender for 420 Harvard Street project.
- 8 The pell was received and I don't the exact date.
- 9 I'm happy to furnish that to the Board. It is in
- 10 the binder. And I believe it was filed well within
- 11 the time frame to the Zoning Board Appeals prior to
- 12 any other moratorium that took place.
- 13 MS. SCHNEIDER: In this binder of
- 14 materials have you also furnished to us evidence of
- 15 site control?
- MR. SHEEN: Yes, we have, and we
- 17 are -- we're happy to resubmit site control
- 18 documentation and core documents if that's needed.
- 19 The site has been owned by our partner, Shimon
- 20 Cohen, for over 20 years, and so if need be, we are
- 21 can furnish that additional documentation.
- MS. SELKOE: The date of the pell
- 23 letter is July 2, 2018.
- MR. GELLER: Just to be clear, I

- 1 think there was a transfer between the original
- 2 owner into your...
- 3 MR. SHEEN: That's right. So I think
- 4 the intention, as with any project, the intention is
- 5 that the development will be held by a single asset
- 6 entity. So by way of cleaning up the title and
- 7 ownership I think Mr. Cohen transferred the
- 8 ownership to the current entity, 445 Harvard, LLC as
- 9 the applicant.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Anyone?
- 11 Anything else? Okay. Thank you, Mr. Sheen. We are
- 12 now going to open this up for public comment. If
- 13 you are here as a member of the public and you would
- 14 like to offer us your thoughts about what we have
- 15 heard so far in this project, I would ask that you
- 16 please approach the podium and provide us with your
- 17 name and your address. And if you are going to
- 18 speak, please do speak loudly, clearly, and slowly
- 19 because, as I may have failed to mention at the
- 20 beginning of the hearing, we do have a transcription
- 21 being made and it will be extremely helpful so we
- 22 can capture your comments, if you can make sure...
- MR. GELLER: Let me just mention, the
- 24 way this process typically works is that the

- 1 transcript is available on the Town's website under
- 2 the Planning Board, I think, site.
- 3 MS. SELKOE: The Planning
- 4 Department.
- 5 MR. GELLER: Sorry, the Planning
- 6 Department is different. It's about two weeks after
- 7 each respective hearing that the transcript will be
- 8 available. Other materials will also be available
- 9 as they're presented in the hearings so that anyone
- 10 who wants information on this matter should be able
- 11 to retrieve all of it on-line.
- MS. SELKOE: Right. And if you have
- 13 trouble doing that or you have any questions, you
- 14 can give me a call. I'm Polly Selkoe, Assistant
- 15 Director of Regulatory Planning.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Sir?
- 17 MR. ROSENTHAL: Yes. I'm Marty
- 18 Rosenthal. I'm a Town meeting member in precinct 9
- 19 and I'm a former selectman and I've lived in this
- 20 neighborhood all of my short life. I grew up on the
- 21 other side of Harvard Street, and I finally made it
- 22 across Harvard to Columbia Street.
- I've really started dealing with
- 24 40(b)s maybe one of the first was 121 Center Street

- 1 before some of you were born. That's probably 20
- 2 years ago. I'm trying to remember, but I don't
- 3 know. The point is that I yield to nobody in terms
- 4 of the number of years contesting some 40(b)s, but
- 5 I've generally been, as some of you know, not here
- 6 recently, for two reasons. First, I've been busy
- 7 with other things, but secondly, I've always felt
- 8 that expert development was especially bad in the
- 9 residential neighborhood but the active commercial
- 10 streets like Harvard and Beacon and Washington --
- 11 well, some of Washington -- were much more suited to
- 12 more density. And for that reason I haven't been
- 13 here, I don't think, on the recent ones on Harvard
- 14 Street, for instance.
- But in this case I'm here for a
- 16 different reason, and at least I Ms. Selkoe is aware
- 17 of it, and this is one that I feel guilty about
- 18 because it really is a
- 19 no-good-deed-shall-go-unpunished reason. This gas
- 20 station is very wonderful for the neighborhood, and
- 21 I don't know how that fits into the 40(b)
- 22 regulations, and I feel badly for Mr. Cohen that I'm
- 23 here opposing this project for that reason because
- 24 it's his gas station that's been wonderful. And

- 1 he's heard me say this before. I said it at the
- 2 initial selectmens hearing on this topic. And I
- 3 don't want to belabor that. I could give you lots
- 4 of reasons why it's a wonderful gas station and lots
- 5 of people that I know that use it for a service
- 6 station. In fact, there is so few service stations
- 7 anymore. In fact there are even less gas stations
- 8 than there used to be, but there are hardly any
- 9 places that you can get service like this that's
- 10 dependable, honest, reliable in terms of price, and
- 11 the people there are wonderful.
- 12 So the issue that I have raised is
- 13 the site control issue. And I am aware and
- 14 Mr. Cohen knows I know this that there is some kind
- 15 of arrangement between him and the current manager.
- 16 I think he's titled manager. I don't know what his
- 17 position is. That will give the manager right to
- 18 operate the gas station for a certain period of
- 19 time. I'm not sure if it's five years or ten years.
- 20 And that raises a question to me in light of the
- 21 40(b) issue. As you all know very well, we're
- 22 approaching the 40(b) threshold and we're hoping to
- 23 get over it soon, and I yield to nobody in working
- 24 for affordable housing in Brookline. In fact, one

- 1 reason I'm no longer a selectman after 30 years is
- 2 because I supported rent control, and I've supported
- 3 affordable housing and partly for that reason in the
- 4 dense areas is because some extra affordable units
- 5 is a good thing, but what's happening on Harvard
- 6 Street right now as you all know, is there is so
- 7 much going in there that there is no way that
- 8 Harvard Street is going to be a passable street in
- 9 ten years. And what's going on is people, including
- 10 myself, I admit it, I'm driving in the neighborhoods
- 11 instead. I never go on Harvard Street. I go on
- 12 Winchester. I go down Thorndike and make secuitus
- 13 routes to Beacon Street. And that's really not my
- 14 major reason for being here but it enters into the
- 15 background of my concern about this project.
- So the question is is whether or not
- 17 this agreement, and I think the proponents need to
- 18 be asked about it because I gather from Ms.
- 19 Steinfeld that this information has been conveyed
- 20 and I don't know if it's been resolved. This is in
- 21 December that she wrote back to some of the town
- 22 meeting members that she would update us on the
- 23 state response, but the site control was initially
- 24 approved by, I guess, called pell letter or whatever

- 1 it's called, but it does seem to me that what's
- 2 going on is that they're trying to get in under the
- 3 40(b) deadline for the ten percent threshold, but
- 4 they're not going to be able to do this for a while
- 5 if they honor the agreement that I believe is true,
- 6 and I have to wonder if that comports with at least
- 7 the spirit of 40(b) and maybe the letter of the law.
- 8 I don't know if it's -- I guess site control in the
- 9 regulations, I haven't look at them, but I think
- 10 that should be examined by this Board and it seems
- 11 to me it's a legitimate question. Maybe I'm wrong.
- 12 I'm a lawyer. I don't do what you folks are experts
- 13 in. So that's what I have to say. I could say a
- 14 lot more about how wonderful the gas station is, but
- 15 for that reason it will be bad for the neighborhood
- 16 to lose that establishment, and I don't know how
- 17 that comports with the regulations, but I have no
- 18 doubt that it will be bad for the neighborhood for
- 19 that reason.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you very much.
- 21 Anyone else? Ma'am?
- MS. KATES: Beth Kates, I'm a town
- 23 meeting member from are Precinct 9. I have to agree
- 24 with Marty. I think that it will be a terrible loss

- 1 for the neighborhood. I've heard a lot of comments
- 2 from my constituents about how great the car repair
- 3 service and how everyone is going to miss it. And I
- 4 don't share Marty's tolerance of the amount of
- 5 development in this area. I would say in all of
- 6 Coolidge Corner, but let's look at Steadman Street
- 7 to Commonwealth Avenue. And along Harvard Street
- 8 itself there are four 40(b)s in process at some
- 9 point. There is 420, 455, this one, and then
- 10 Rubins. There have been a lot of promises made and
- 11 promises broken regarding these 40(b)s including --
- 12 I mean, I don't know about site control, but I know
- 13 that there was a restaurant where 455 is and there
- 14 were promises made to that business owner about
- 15 being able to stay there and eventually they were
- 16 moved to Rubins and now Rubins is going under the
- 17 wrecking ball as well. So we lost more businesses.
- 18 And I have to tell you that the
- 19 safety issues regarding what's going on currently at
- 20 420 is pretty hazardous. There are no sidewalk
- 21 during that construction on that side of the street
- 22 and there is a lot of elderly people who walk that
- 23 way. It's really, really dangerous, so much so that
- 24 I have asked that the transportation board look at

- 1 changing some of the traffic patterns in that area
- 2 to make it safer, and one of the issues with 420 is
- 3 that the Fuller Street lot exit is directly opposite
- 4 the exit to their parking garage, and it looks like
- 5 this is going to be the same situation on Thorndike
- 6 Street where you have two parking garages that are
- 7 exactly opposite each other, and I think that's
- 8 really, really dangerous.
- 9 So I mean in addition to these we
- 10 have 71 Winchester which is asking for setback
- 11 relief but not 40(b), also not a 40(b) but asking
- 12 for setback relief. There is development on Fuller
- 13 Street and then there is the JCHE project at 384
- 14 Harvard Street. These are within a few blocks of
- 15 each other. And this is just way too much
- 16 development. And this creates, as Marty was saying,
- 17 a huge traffic problem on Harvard Street, a huge
- 18 safety issue. We have elderly housing a 100 Center
- 19 and elderly and housing proposed at 384 Harvard. We
- 20 have housing at 112 for people with disabilities,
- 21 and you know -- and the senior center. and senior
- 22 center parking is the Fuller Street parking lot.
- 23 You have all of these issues in addition to the KI
- 24 and Mission to Fuller traffic that uses the Fuller

- 1 Street parking lot and all the surrounding streets
- 2 and the new Coolidge Corner School teacher parking.
- 3 This is just way too much going on in way too little
- 4 of an area.
- 5 And the height of this building is
- 6 out of keeping with the neighborhood, and you
- 7 know -- well, I understand that in this process
- 8 everything gets tweaked, but it's got to come down.
- 9 I don't think that we need another building of this
- 10 type in these few square blocks, but thank you.
- 11 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.
- 12 MS. SHAW: Hi, I'm Sloane Shaw. I
- 13 live at 88 Thorndike Street. I have a number of
- 14 concerns with this project that haven't been
- 15 addressed by this presentation. There is a lot of
- 16 talk in the presentation about building setbacks at
- 17 the fifth story but not about building setbacks at
- 18 the base of the building, and I think that is a very
- 19 obvious thing when building are being built out to
- 20 the edge of the lot with no setback at all and have
- 21 all the discussion about setbacks of the fifth story
- 22 seems like something is being misleading in this. I
- 23 don't like that kind of presentation when everything
- 24 isn't kind of up front.

- One of the things that bothered me
- 2 about this building is that Shimon has owned this
- 3 gas station for about 20 years. I've been on
- 4 Thorndike Street from '81, so I know the previous
- 5 gas station and I know that now Mass Department of
- 6 Environmental Protection has different rules than it
- 7 used to have been when it was originally a gas
- 8 station, but I haven't seen any talk about
- 9 remediating all of the leaks that happened before
- 10 this became Shimon's gas station. I'm saying maybe
- 11 in the last 20 years there has been something, but
- 12 we don't know what's underneath and I don't know
- 13 where all of that soil and all of that -- it's like
- 14 what's going to be happening with all of that land
- 15 that's going to removed and excavated. And there
- 16 were a number of times in these past years when
- 17 there have been flooding, gas leaks into the
- 18 neighboring buildings on Thorndike Street and also
- 19 on other areas. And we called the fire department a
- 20 number of times and there was always something being
- 21 spilled down the drain, but we don't know what else
- 22 is in that property, and I think that is something
- 23 that is essential to be covered.
- 24 The other thing is that the gas leaks

- 1 have been happening on Thorndike Street. I'm sure
- 2 you've been aware that the police have been there
- 3 and a lot of -- I'm not sure what its name is now.
- 4 Energy... but anyway, there have been leaks there
- 5 and at least two solid weeks of trying to find the
- 6 leaks, and I was going read something Mark Rosen
- 7 wrote, and I can send it to you Polly, that he
- 8 talked to the policemen and he talked to the -- I'm
- 9 sorry, I'm looking for it. So he talked about the
- 10 gas leaks that were coming on Harvard Street and
- 11 Thorndike. And so the gas company said that the
- 12 construction near on 455 has been affecting the gas
- 13 pipes because they're really old and weak, and with
- 14 this amount of intense building, it's been cracking
- 15 the pipes. So because we've had those gas
- 16 explosions in the Merrimack Valley, I'm really
- 17 concerned about gas leaks. And that was at least
- 18 two weeks of having the police there all the time
- 19 all night long. And so this is a real concern and I
- 20 don't think that it can be kind of shoved under a
- 21 rug that this isn't something that might occur and
- 22 be a danger to the neighbors.
- 23 And the third part about the
- 24 neighborhood is there have been a number of

- 1 accidents on Thorndike and Harvard and going into
- 2 the Babcock area, different pedestrians have been
- 3 hit, people on bicycles have been hit, and now with
- 4 this kind of obstruction that's five feet high, plus
- 5 the things on the top that blocks all view of
- 6 Harvard Street, it's seem like a real problem with
- 7 traffic and all the kids going to Devotion. That's
- 8 another concern that really should be addressed.
- 9 Thank you.
- 10 MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you. Are there
- 11 any other members of the public who would like to
- 12 provide us with comments, and I just want to be very
- 13 clear this is the very beginning of this process.
- 14 There will be numerous additional opportunities for
- 15 us to take public testimony. Yes, Michelle?
- MS. MICHELLE: I just want to say
- 17 that the reason people on Thorndike and Coolidge,
- 18 and I forget the other street right there aren't
- 19 here tonight is they are so upset with the buildings
- 20 at 420 and 455 and they feel like there is nothing
- 21 that can be done with the neighborhood and there is
- 22 no point in coming.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.
- MR. GELLER: Madam Chair, you may

- 1 want to mention that anybody who has been to these
- 2 hearings before will know, this is an iterative
- 3 process and what will happen after this sort of
- 4 global review is that future hearings will be
- 5 dedicated to discrete subjects. One of those
- 6 subjects which was -- and I want to thank the
- 7 comment particularly about environmental issues -- I
- 8 will tell you that, as I understand it -- I
- 9 apologize for jumping the gun.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: That is what you're
- 11 using to doing. It is okay.
- MR. GELLER: We are going to be
- 13 reviewing environmental conditions at the site,
- 14 which is naturally understood given that it is a gas
- 15 station use. So it's a fair comment.
- 16 MS. SCHNEIDER: Yes, it was a fair
- 17 comment. And as I said at the outset, we'll be
- 18 having subject matters specific hearings throughout
- 19 the process on various topics including
- 20 transportation, traffic, parking, environmental, and
- 21 of course design, which I guess brings me to some
- 22 organizational and administrative business that we
- 23 want to bring up with the applicant. Mr. Sheen as
- 24 you and your team are aware, the practice of this

- 1 Board to rely on peer reviewers to advise us as to
- 2 various topics in this case. I think we would be
- 3 looking for traffic and parking peer review,
- 4 environmental, probably an LSP, and also a design
- 5 reviewer. It is customary to ask the applicant if
- 6 they will be prepared to pay for the cost of those
- 7 consultants. Are you prepared to do so?
- MR. SHEEN: We are, and we've spoken
- 9 to staff about this prior to this hearing. I think
- 10 the intention is that we would review the proposals
- 11 and sign off and fund the necessary peer reviewer
- 12 fees to the appropriate accounts as necessary.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you.
- MS. SELKOE: Just to mention that
- 15 stormwater is typically reviewed in-house by Peter
- 16 Ditto who is the Director of Transportation and
- 17 Engineering.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you, Polly.
- 19 Good point. The next thing I wanted to raise with
- 20 the Board is that it is typically the practice with
- 21 40(b) projects that there are meetings between
- 22 planning and other town staff and the development
- 23 team. These are working sessions. As everybody
- 24 knows we are on a very tight time frame to review a

- 1 40(b) project. We have historically found it to be
- 2 more efficient if there are working sessions outside
- 3 of the public process with the caveat that staff
- 4 cannot make any determinations, agreements,
- 5 decisions, and that any kind of project changes or
- 6 developments that come about as a process of those
- 7 meetings would then come back to this Board for
- 8 discussion of public hearing. Is everyone
- 9 comfortable with that as a way of proceeding during
- 10 this project?
- 11 MS. PALERMO: Yes.
- MR. GELLER: Yes.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Polly, is there
- 14 anything else administrative we need to touch on
- 15 other than scheduling our next hearing.
- 16 MS. SELKOE: I think that's it. I
- 17 think that covers everything.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Okay. So we will be
- 19 continuing this to a future date. Do we have an
- 20 agenda for that meeting?
- 21 MS. SELKOE: It will be March 6 and
- 22 we will posting an agenda on-line as it gets closer,
- 23 but most likely the topic will be on the design of
- 24 the building. That's because the other peer

- 1 reviewers may not have finish their reports yet. We
- 2 would like to start on the design issues right
- 3 away.
- 4 MS. SCHNEIDER: Is March 6 agreeable
- 5 to Mr. Sheen?
- 6 MR. SHEEN: So I just was informed
- 7 that Dartagnan may not be available, but we -- is
- 8 that the only date that...
- 9 MS. SELKOE: If he's saying he's not
- 10 available, then we could do March 13. No?
- MR. BROWN: Yes, that would be
- 12 perfect.
- MS. SELKOE: It's always very
- 14 difficult to find a date where everybody is
- 15 available, but certainly the architect should be
- 16 here.
- 17 MR. SHEEN: We'll stick to the 6th.
- 18 We'll find an alternate presenter, so Dartagnan
- 19 won't be able to be here.
- MR. GELLER: Bring a picture of
- 21 Dartagnan.
- MR. SHEEN: Yes. We'll make it
- 23 work.
- MS. SCHNEIDER: Thank you. We

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appreciate that. This hearing is continued until
 1
 2
    March 6 at 7 p.m.
 3
                    (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned
    8 p.m.)
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1
                    CERTIFICATE
 2
    COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
 3
    Worcester, ss.
 4
                  I, Jennifer A. Doherty, Certified
 5
    Shorthand Reporter and Notary in and for the
 6
    Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify
 7
    that the foregoing Pages 1 to 36 to be a true,
 8
    complete and accurate transcript of the testimony of
 9
    the aforementioned hearing held at the time and
10
    place hereinbefore set forth, to the best of my
   knowledge, skill and ability.
11
12
13
14
15
             IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY
16
    HAND AND SEAL THIS 26TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2019.
17
18
19
             Certified Shorthand Reporter
20
             CSR No. 1398F95
21
22
   My Commission Expires:
23
   October 19, 2023
24
```

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